

Mini-MessageMate User Manual

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Mini-MessageMate User Manual

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction to Mini-Messagemate	1-1
2.0 Physical Description	2-2
Specifications	2.3
3.0 Operation	3.1
3.1 Master Power & Volume Control	3.1
3.2 Keyboard Time Allotments	3.1
3.3 Playing Messages with the Keyboard	3.1
3.4 Adjusting the Keyboard	3.2
3.5 Playing Messages with External Switches	3.2
3.6 Built-in Alarm	3.2
3.7 Recording Messages	3.2
3.8 Resetting MessageMate	3.3
3.9 Battery & AC Adapter	3.3
4.0 Troubleshooting Guide	4.1
5.0 Appendices	5-1
5.1 Warranty and Repair Information	5.1
5.2 FCC Compliance/Declaration of Conformity	5.2
5.3 Instruction to the user	5.3

1.0 Introduction To Mini-Message Mate

Congratulations on your purchase of Mini-MessageMate, the lightweight portable voice output communication aid from Words+, Inc. Your Mini-MessageMate has been designed to give you years of easy-to-use, trouble-free speech output communication.

MessageMate is a device that stores recorded sounds and lets you play them back. It is not a voice synthesizer, which assembles elementary sounds together to produce words and sentences. It is more like a tape recorder, except that there is no tape. The sounds are recorded from the built-in microphone and are stored in the internal electronics (in integrated circuit "chips"). The Mini-MessageMate 8/60 has 8 keys and 60 seconds total recording time.

(There is also a MessageMate 20 series with 20 keys and up to 150 seconds total recording time, and two MessageMate 40 series with 40 keys and up to 600 seconds total recording time..)

Because the sounds produced by MessageMate are recorded, you can use it to speak any language (or more than one language!) and to produce other sounds (such as a dog barking, a bell ringing, etc.) for training purposes. Also, recording allows quick reprogramming - all 8 items can be rerecorded within just a few seconds. Each key on the Mini-MessageMate keyboard is independently recorded - you do not have to rerecord all keys just to change one.

Mini-MessageMate is intended for use where:

- a small number of basic messages will suffice for most of the situations the user will encounter
- an extremely rugged device is needed
- low cost is important
- simple language concepts are desirable

About this manual

The remainder of this manual describes the operation of MessageMate. Section 2 provides a basic physical description of the device. Section 3 describes how to use the device with the sample messages we've stored for you, and how to put new messages into your MessageMate. Section 4 presents samples of ways to program MessageMate for efficient communication with only 8 messages. Finally, Section 5 provides troubleshooting tips in the event you experience a problem with your unit. Of course, if you need further assistance, have questions or suggestions, please call our technical support staff toll-free in the United States or Canada at (800) 869-8521, from outside the U.S. or Canada at (661) 723-6523 or Fax us at (661) 723-2114.

2.0 Physical Description

The Mini-MessageMate is a device which weighs approximately 1 pound (about 3/4 kilogram), and is approximately 7 inches (17.8 cm) long, 3.1 inches (7.9 cm) wide, and 1.25 inches (3.2 cm) thick. Several views of the unit are shown below. The main body of the case is made of aluminum. The end caps are made from high impact plastic. The top of the unit includes the keyboard, which consists of eight 1 1/4 x 1 1/4 inch (3.2 cm x 3.2 cm) membrane keys, 8 light emitting diodes (LED's) within each of the keys, a RECORD key separate from the 8 language keys, a RECORD LED to indicate when the unit is in the RECORD mode, and a hole for sound to enter the built-in microphone.

The 8 language keys are large enough to accommodate the 3/4 inch picture symbol stickers from the Mayer-Johnson Company (PCS - Picture Communication Symbols). A clear plastic pocket is provided on the keyboard to hold a clear sheet of plastic with words or symbols representing the recorded speech items (this sheet is called an "overlay"), Several extra overlays are also provided in the back of this manual. These can be filled with whatever symbols or words you find most convenient. If you would like to have more picture symbols, the complete set of Mayer-Johnson stickers is available from Words+ (See section 3.3).



Figure 2-1

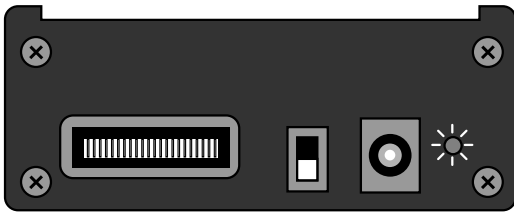


Figure 2-2

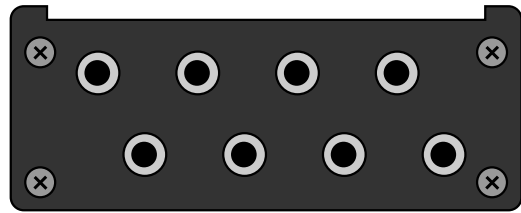


Figure 2-3

The top end panel (Figure 2-2) includes the thumbwheel-style volume control (which is also the master ON/OFF switch), the lock/unlock switch for recording, a coaxial jack where the battery charger is plugged in, and a battery charger/low battery warning LED.

The bottom end panel (Figure 2-3) includes eight 1/8" (3.2 mm) miniphone jacks for switch inputs to allow switch activation of each message key on the Mini-MessageMate keyboard.

On the bottom of the MessageMate unit (Figure 2-4), a label with a condensed set of operating instructions is provided for your convenience, along with the speaker holes.



Figure 2-4

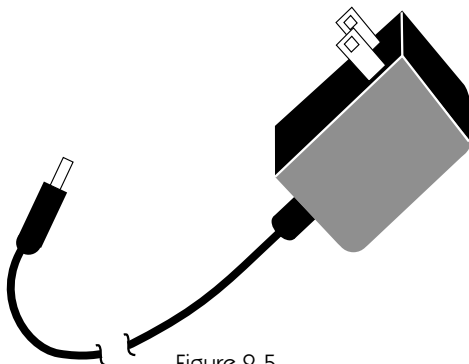


Figure 2-5

The standard AC adapter/recharger (Figure 2-5) allows recharging the internal battery and/or operating the unit on AC power (during charging) if the internal battery becomes completely discharged.

2.1 Specifications

Dimensions: 7" x 3.1" x 1.25" (17.8cm x 7.9cm x 3.2cm)

Weight: 1 lb. (approx. 1/2 kilogram)

Number of keys: 8

Total recording time: 60 seconds total

Key size: 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" (3.2cm x 3.2cm)

Key sensitivity: 2.5 oz. (70g) [somewhat more with optional clear plastic stiffener]

Materials: Aluminum, Fiberglass, and high impact plastic

Language: Sample overlays/Optional Mayer-Johnson or Imaginart stickers or Makaton or Blissymbol icons

Custom Keyguard: Optional

Custom nylon carrying case with see-through window: Standard

3.0 Operation

You will find your MessageMate to be very easy to use. When you receive it, you should be able to take it out of the box, turn it on (with the volume control), and press any key to produce speech output using the sample messages we loaded in at the factory. This section describes how to make the MessageMate produce messages. Section 4 describes how to record them.

3.1 Master power and volume control

The thumbwheel-style volume control also contains the master ON/OFF switch, which operates like many radios. You'll feel and hear a "click" when the power switch is activated. When the switch is OFF, you cannot move the thumbwheel without turning it back ON. When it is ON, moving the thumbwheel controls the volume level of the speaker, as well as allowing you to turn the unit off.



Note: You do not need to turn the unit off in normal use. MessageMate automatically goes into a "sleep" mode between messages. (In the sleep mode, a fully-charged battery will power the unit for nearly two months). Actual battery life between charges will depend on how often you use the unit. You should be able to generate over 5,000 messages on a full charge. If you use 100 messages a day, you should be able to go for 50 days. If you use 200 a day, you should go about 25 days, and so on. When the battery is low, the battery charge/low battery warning LED will glow red. Turn the thumbwheel to the OFF position when you know you won't be using the MessageMate for several days, or when you pack it for shipping (so that if something presses against the keys while it's packed, it won't run down the battery).

3.2 Keyboard time allotments

The amount of time allotted for each key on the keyboard is determined by the total amount of record time. Approximate time in seconds.

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

8/60

Keys 1-8: 7.5 seconds

3.3 Playing messages with the keyboard

Your MessageMate was shipped from Words+ with a sample set of messages and a sample overlay containing 8 picture and word symbols, as shown in Figure 2- 1. Additional Mayer-Johnson and Imaginart picture stickers are available from Words+.

Turn the volume control/ON-OFF switch to on and set the volume to about the middle of the range of free movement of the control. Now press the "NAME" key on the keyboard. The unit should say "Hi, my name is". Now try the other keys. Each one should produce the message indicated on the key. That's how easy it is to use MessageMate!

3.4 Adjusting the keyboard

The standard amount of pressure required to operate the MessageMate keys is about 2.5 oz. (70 grams). This assumes only a single overlay with symbols placed under the plastic pocket window. For some users, the standard pressure will be too tight, and keys will be accidentally activated.

To increase the amount of pressure required to activate the keys, you can insert the optional clear plastic stiffener sheet underneath the overlay.

An optional keyguard is also available to fit MessageMate. It is basically a clear plastic sheet of material with holes in it for the keys, which is mounted and supported so that the user can rest his or her hand on the keyboard without activating any keys, but can reach through the holes to push keys when desired. Unlike other keyguards, that have small, round holes, this keyguard has square holes with rounded corners which allows it to accommodate larger fingers.

3.5 Playing messages with external switches

The MessageMate has eight jacks, which you connect up to eight external switches. Each of the eight switch input jacks corresponds to one of the eight message keys on the keyboard, and pressing one of the external switches plays the corresponding message. Note that while you are making a recording, the external switches still operate the message keys, and may affect your recording. When you are making a recording, you should make sure no one presses any of the external switches connected to the MessageMate, or simply unplug the external switches.

The external jacks are invaluable in using the MessageMate as a training tool for a single user, or as a group participation tool for up to eight users at once.

3.6 Built-In Alarm

MessageMate has a built-in attention getting alarm. Holding any message key or external switch down for 20 seconds activates the alarm. The alarm sounds until you release the message key or external switch.

3.7 Recording Messages

Recording new messages under each of the keys is a straightforward process. Messages (or any other sounds) are stored by recording through the built-in microphone.

The amount of recording time available under each key depends on the particular model of the Mini-Message Mate that you purchased (see section 3.2).

To record, simply perform the following steps:

1 - On the top end panel, move the RECORD/LOCK switch up to RECORD.

2 - To record a message for any key, you simply press and hold down the RECORD key. (The RECORD LED on the front of the unit will be lit as long as the RECORD/LOCK switch is in the RECORD position, and the RECORD key is held.) Press and hold a message key while holding the record key. Speak directly into the microphone - try to get within about 6 inches (15 cm) of the microphone and speak loudly and clearly (but try not to get too close or to talk too loudly experiment a little to get a good idea of the best distance and loudness). As soon as

you press the key to be recorded, the recording process begins. The LED next to the key will remain lit during the recording process, until the allotted time for that key is used up or until the key is released. Experiment a few times to develop a feel for the recording process. Note that while you are making a recording, the external switches still operate the message keys, and may affect your recording. When you are making a recording, you should make sure no one presses any of the external switches connected to the MessageMate, or simply unplug the external switches.

3 - When you are done recording, be sure to set the RECORD/LOCK switch back down to the LOCK position. Then test each of the keys. If any do not sound correct, rerecord those keys.

3.8 Resetting MessageMate

If you feel that you have accidentally re-programmed, de-programmed, or otherwise just completely ruined some or all of the settings on MessageMate, not to worry - resetting the unit is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Turn unit off.
2. Hold the record key for at least 5 seconds.
3. Turn unit back on.

The unit is now reset, and should record and play normally. Your messages are not erased by resetting.

3.9 Battery charging and A/C Adapter (See 3. 1 for battery "sleep " mode)

MessageMate requires 10 to 15 hours for a full charge. When the batteries are low, the battery charge/low battery warning LED will glow red. When you plug in the AC adaptor to charge the unit, the LED will glow green. It will continue to glow green as long as the AC adaptor is plugged in, even if the MessageMate is fully charged.

The rechargeable Ni-Cad batteries inside MessageMate like to be charged and discharged. It is best to use the unit until it gives its low battery warning sound, and then charge it fully. This is better than keeping the unit fully charged all the time. If you keep it charged all the time, it will lose its ability to hold a charge. If this happens, go back to using the unit until it gives its low battery warning sound, then recharge it. Chances are, after a few charges and discharges, it will recover its ability to hold a charge.

If your A/C Adapter should be lost or broken, you should call Words+ for a replacement to avoid violating the warranty. However, most A/C adapters (either 50 or 60 HZ providing output of 12VDC to 35VDC and at least 300mA) will work fine. The connector on the adapter must be a 2.1 mm female coaxial plug. We have designed the MessageMate so that either positive tip or negative tip is acceptable.

4.0 Troubleshooting Guide

This section provides a guide for troubleshooting your MessageMate in the event you experience problems. Because your MessageMate has been designed to be simple and rugged, you may never need this section; however, take a few minutes to glance at the items listed, so that if you ever encounter difficulty, you may remember that a solution exists for you in this section.

Problem: No response to keyboard - no sound, no LED's light.

Cause: On/Off Switch is Off position.

Solution: Turn On/Off knob until it clicks on, then turn half way up for medium volume sound.

Cause: Battery dead.

Solution: Charge battery. Unit will operate at the same time battery is charging, without slowing down the charging process.

Problem: LED's light when keys are pressed, but no sound is produced.

Cause: Volume control is all the way down.

Solution: Turn volume control up.

Problem: MessageMate plays only part of a recording.

Cause: Battery is nearly dead.

Solution: Charge battery. You can use the unit while it is charging.

Problem: The sound stored under a key has been erased.

Cause: This can happen if the RECORD/LOCK switch is left in the unlocked position and the RECORD key and MESSAGE key are pressed without recording new sounds.

Solution: Rerecord the sound and set the RECORD/LOCK switch back to the locked position.

Problem: No response to switch(es), but responds to keys.

Cause: Switch failure.

Solution: Replace switch.

Problem: No response to keys, but responds to switches.

Cause: Keyboard failure.

Solution: Replace keyboard (factory repair).

Problem: Record light does not come on when RECORD/LOCK switch is placed in the UNLOCK position and record key is pressed.

Cause: LED failure.

Solution: To replace LED, call Words+.

Problem: Sound quality is less than desired.

Cause: Recording too far away or too close to microphone. Recording too loudly or too quietly. Air flow from speaking is blowing directly into microphone. Volume control set too high, causing distortion.

Solution: Use good recording technique - see section 3.7.

Cause: Microphone malfunctioning.

Solution: Replace microphone (factory repair).

Problem: User cannot see LED's for scanning.

Causes: - Undesirable viewing angle Ambient light Unit at inappropriate distance from user

Solution: Reposition unit so that it more directly faces the user. Reposition unit so that strong direct light is not on the LED's, or provide shading to prevent strong light from hitting face of unit. Move unit closer to user.

Problem: Sound volume is not loud enough.

Cause: Recording from too far away or too quietly Volume control set too low Battery is weak
External speaker required

Solution: Use good recording technique. See section 3.7. Charge battery. Use external speaker.

Problem: Battery will not hold charge.

Cause: Low battery capacity due to continuous charging.

Solution: Charge battery until fully charged (overnight). Use MessageMate until it issues a low battery warning. (LED indicator lights red when the battery is low). Continue this cycling several times.

Cause: Battery failure.

Solution- Replace battery (factory repair).

Cause: Defective charger.

Solution: If you suspect a defective charger, have it tested at an electronics store or send it back to us for testing. We will be happy to repair or replace it for you.

5.0 Appendices: Warranty & Repair Service

All Words+ manufactured products and all batteries are warranted to be free from manufacturing defects for a full year from the date of purchase. This warranty includes all parts and labor required to restore defective products to serviceable condition. The Freedom 2000 computer-based communication systems come with a three-year warranty on parts and labor. Items that have been damaged by accident, abuse, or misuse are not covered under the warranty. For terms and conditions of warranties covering specific products, please call.

Words+ recognizes that when a person's communication system is not working, that person's quality of life is greatly reduced. For this reason, we have always assigned repairs top priority. In the unlikely event that your system needs to be sent in for service, we will make every effort to see that it is repaired and returned to you as soon as possible. This policy applies whether or not your equipment is under warranty. All out-of-warranty repairs must be paid for in advance or by C.O.D. return delivery. Please see the Words+ Repair Service below for more information.

Repair Service

In the unlikely event that your system needs to be sent in for service, we will make every reasonable effort to see that it is repaired and returned to you as quickly as possible. This policy applies regardless of whether your equipment is under warranty. All out-of-warranty repairs must be paid for in advance or by C.O.D. return. If you think an item should be sent in for repair, call us first. Many times the problem can be corrected over the phone, saving you time and expense. If your unit must be returned, please be sure to do the following:

- 1.** Call (800) 869-8521 for a Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) number. Items returned without RMA numbers will not be accepted.
- 2.** Write the RMA number on the outside of the package.
- 3.** Use at least 2-3" of packing material around the item, and pack it in a strong box using sealing tape. Do not use paper or string on the outside of the box. Insufficient packing material may cause extreme damage to your equipment.
- 4.** Enclose a note with RMA number describing the problem. Include a daytime phone number and the street address where the item is to be returned.
- 5.** Ship by UPS. The item will be returned by the same means of delivery used to send it to us (excluding Next Day Air). If you wish to have the item returned using faster delivery, you must pay the difference. If the item is under warranty, it will be returned free of charge. If not, it will be returned C.O.D., unless prepayment has been made.
- 7.** Insure each individual item for full replacement value.

5.2 FCC Compliance & Declaration of Conformity

Trade name:	AAC Device
Model number:	MM8 (Mini-MessageMate)
Compliance test report number:	A70303E1
Compliance test report date:	Mar. 3, 1997
Responsible party (in U.S.A.):	Words+, Inc.
Address:	1920 W. Avenue J, Lancaster, CA 93534
Telephone:	(661) 723-6523

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class B digital device, pursuant to Part 15 of the FCC rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference in a residential installation. This equipment generates, uses, and can radiate radio frequency energy and, if not installed and used in accordance with the instructions, may cause harmful interference to radio communications; however, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation.

If the unit does cause harmful interference to radio or television reception, please refer to your user's manual for instructions on correcting the problem.

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the equipment specified above conforms to the above requirements.

Place: Los Angeles County

Signature: _____

Date: May 13, 1997

Full Name: Virginia E. Woltosz

Position: Senior Vice President

5.3 Instruction to the user

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a class B digital device, pursuant to part 15 of the FCC Rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference in a residential installation. This equipment generates, uses, and can radiate radio frequency energy and, if not installed and used in accordance with the instructions, may cause harmful interference to radio communications; however, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation.

If this equipment does cause harmful interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

- Reorient or relocate the receiving antenna.
- Increase the separation between the equipment and receiver.
- Connect the equipment into an outlet on a circuit different from that to which the receiver is connected.
- Consult the dealer or an experienced radio/TV technician for help.

In order to maintain compliance with FCC regulations, shielded cables must be used with this equipment. Operation with non-approved equipment or unshielded cables is likely to result in interference to radio and TV reception. The user is cautioned that changes and modifications made to the equipment without approval of the manufacturer could void the user's authority to operate this equipment.